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9発明の名称 其空薄膜処理装置

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1. 発明の名称

天空界級処理技能

2.特許請求の範囲

3. 结例の辞酬な政明

本発明はスパッタリングにより、同一形状の多数の 板状 遊体になる と自動的に 解説 を形成するスパッタ 級 戦の 構造に関するもの である。 史に 具体

的には、本発明はスパッチ袋便の保守に起因する 袋間のグウンタイムを短かくし、袋包運転の会時間に占める正保の生盤時間の比率を大きくとることのできるスパッチ袋童の構造に関するもので る。

本発明の其体的応用分割過程である。 名の 2 5 mm 内 3 5 mm

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ェーベだけを処理室に特込む構造の機能が超される。また大量のウェーベに均気を背談を選挙を選挙負く 作級するためには、ウェーベの操作はできる試り 作級者が直接手を放れずに自動的にお送処理する ととが望ましい。更にまた、ウェーベ表面は反足 の料本の容製のみで被反されることが必要であり 数値を延載が収入したりるるいは製の付着のない ピンホール等の発生が抜われる。そのため低に返 次が生じても異作級数中はその延収がウェーベの 表面に提供されることが好ましい。

上述の知を目的に使用されるスペック検索の及 型派は、基本的には、基体上に移襲作製を行う処理無と、処理的の基件を大気中から非入しかつ処理所みの基件を大気中へ放送するロードロック版とで構成される。そして通常は、処理的はその不純物がス分圧を出来るだけ数く調明するため其空状態に促えれてショ、ロードロック度が対象体の出し入れの必要大気に近されかつ大気圧からスセにおいる。ロードロック度が異型になった状 数ではじめてロード=ック室と処理室の間の仕切 弁が弱き、それぞれの容器の間を多体が移送されるようになっている。

ところで低めて大量のウェーハを長時間にわたり処理する生態工程を考えるとき、スペッチ級を を長日月に立り造成して実践処理選続することは 先づ言識的には考えられない。即ち、必ず何か親 を出したとり数数を停止し、処理室の天空をなかの るの長を生する。生業者にとって好さしくなかの とではあるが、避けられない数数の存止の埋むる とではあるが、過けられない数数の存止のを を立ってはない。他のののではない。 会社の努力により、その事故の発生の保証と は本の努力により、その事故の発生の保証と いるが、経済性をどの理由からこれを完全に無く することはできない。

一致的には、長点な動格の最低を長点な低失で 選続することが行なわれ、ひしろ足別的に処職量 の実空を被欺し状態的に保守作業を行なっている 保守作業の内容としては、債耗した古いメーグッ

ト村の新品との交換、メライオポンプの各生によ る勢気能力の匹仗、容容力に付着したスペック製 の飲会、タェーへ移送機構機能の有調整等が含ま れる。保守作業後、天空処職会は閉ちられ界び袋 気されるが、点初述べたように、反定の品質の何 膜を得るためには処理室の不純物ガス分圧を完分 低くするととが必要で、生型に入る前に充分を許 気。ペーキング、ブリスペッタリングなど長時間 の子供製作が行われなければならない。タェーハ 上に存版を作以する正味の生血時間と、それ以外 の袋包の運転時間、即ち事故により袋袋が停止し た時間ととれを停復する時間と あらかじめ計画さ れた定期的を保守作業の時間とその後の生産開始 までの子伯法作に受ける時間の合計時間の調合は 袋虻の構成と使用部品の信頼性、袋観を運転しま 九保守作業を行う作業者の製作、作業の遺否。以 鉄度。作数ナベを映化表末される特性の貿易の社 度等、各種製物の影響を受ける。しかし如何なる スパッチ袋杖にかいても、保守作業とそれに近く 生政が同のための予備操作の時間が全体の時間に 占める割合は相点大きい。例えば現在用いられている典談的なスペック級似では、約33時間をかけて2000枚のウェーベを処理すると、その都成処理室の裏空を破壊し、ターゲット交換を含む低等作業を行うが、保守作業を含めて次の生世行同までに4時間以上を発でしている。また別のスペック級似では約100時間かけて5,600枚のウェーベの処理するとその都度次の生態までに約10時間の保守作業と予何級作を必要としている。

本発明の目的は上途の関地を解決するスパック 装置を提供することである。即ち、スパック優優 遂伝の金時間に占める正煕の解製作製時間の割合 を大きくてきる前規の装置の提供を目的とするも のである。

さて、その姿質の概要を述べると、この不発明 にかいては一つの実型構築処理袋数の内部に同じ 機能の再級処理室を数数値保える。そして袋数が 点なに収拾している間は、その中のボーの処理室 で再級の処理が行むわれ、他の処象室は必要のた めには使用されない。次に分達の計画中間の形質

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次に図載により、更に具体的を収明をする。 第1回は、従来方式のスパック装数の一例を示す。図にかいて装置は、ロードロック室、3件の中間収納室20、資処塩室30、及びスパック室50で構成され、各室の間に仕切弁21、31、41が設けられている。各部組は図示されていまいま

処理作業が終り、米しの処理型の処理を停止して 七の共皇を伝う自然の保守作品を加丁収拾に立る と、存業処理をすべき著件は叙述経路を変更して 終まの処理意民志り込まれ、そとで処理が開始さ れる。そして、第2の処態室で処理が行をわれる のに並行して、第1の処理室内では足額的保守作 葉が行われ、それに氏いて処理を資格するための 予備幾作が行われる。との定期的保守作業と予備 投作に父ヤされる時間は、一枚に無1、似2の名 処理室が正比作業に対える時間よりは近いので、 新2の処理監がその処理を停止して保守すべき時 現れ遊したときには気に新1の処理室では処理を **州湖でまる状態にせっている。かく、河じ仏館を** 6 つは 1 の処理量と第2の処理量を交互に使用す ることにより、切れ目なく解説の処理を行うこと がでもる。主た、との方式によれば千足していた い事故が先生して処理室を修理せればからぬ場合 が生じた時代も、それ仏使用していたかった処理 当の万へ近程すべき当板を送り込み生営を抵抗し ながら単数を必要することができる。

ンプにより七れぞれ独立に抑気され其空に維持さ れる。 近しい釜休はカセット12代収的されてロ ードロック室の入口11からロードロック室10 に挿入され、また、スペッチサングにより観付処 思が好んだ妖化とゝから年出される。 中間収納室 20代は二輪のカセット 22.23 が収けられてい る。中間収納意20は、ロードロック食10の質 用による前処理立ちの及びスペック賞50の英型 の気の劣化を粉止すると共に、米処理派体と処理 読予基体の 製造が英配会体の時間直り処理能力を 気住にせず行をわれるような役目を果して少り、 その何以と役割に負する詳細な説明は、行政略 5 5-「69057及び弁政昭55-137802の中に与 えられている。肩処理宣3:0 はスパッタ級作製の 前数指で弱体加熱あるいはスパッタエッテング等 の予備的処理を行う役割を果す。基件は、4個の ステージ 26,27.28,29のいプれかの上に配置 させられる。とのうちステージ21は加熱もるい はスパックエッナンダに使用され、スナージ29 は冷却帯に使用できる。ロードロック取10、中

関収的室20、及び前処理室30にかける当体の 設置はベルトを使用した監察認動と返集の動を中心とする目伝達動によって行われるが、それらに ついては特別的55-151815, 仲以的56-35 743に拝測に収明されている。

スペッチ以 5 0 内では、水平状態の著体 4 2 (一点銀銀)が、 9 0 超転して 4 3 化元子如くほぼ 粉載状態に保持され、次いで、 そのままスペッチ 盒 3 0 のほぼ中心に有る鉛版 報 3 0 1 の舞門を 約 9 0 ステップで図板する。 とのスペッチ 盒 3 0 の 数 2 の ステップで図板する。 とのスペッチ 盒 3 0 の 数 2 の ステップで図板する。 とのスペッチ 盒 3 0 の ステージで 番体 4 4 は 加熱ランプ 5 1 。 5 2 により 加熱 される。 阿似に 3 1 0 な で は 4 の ステージで は 番 体 に 対 向 する 位 数 に スペッチ 電 低 6 0 。 6 0 が 数 け 5 れ て いる。 スペッチ 電 低 は チーグット 6 1 。 カソード ボディ 6 2 に な に な け け いる。 カソード ボディ 6 2 に は スペッチ 数 り、 絶 域 体 6 3 を 介 し て 入 空 を に な け け な 7 0 よ り 約 電 数 7 1 、 7 2 を 延 し て (アース 数

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位に対して)気の高度圧が印加される。ただし会 高級異型容器型は、アース数81でアースされア ース型位にもる。関示されていなスス等入系を 他自して、スペック監多のにアルゴン等のガスを 供給すると、監査型で低圧ガス数型が生じ時イ オンがターヴット61等を叩く起来、スペックリ カセット12に収容された当体13は矢印をモリ な、中間収納重新1カセット23に一度シモリ 大いて矢印り。 c 。 d 。 e 。 f 。 g 、 b 。 j 。 k 取納面20の製まカセット22に戻る。そして 取納面20の製まカセット22に戻る。そして 取りのよっト位数に戻る。以上が従来級級の動きでる る。

第2回は本発明によるスペック後数の実施列を 尽す。本実施列にかいてもロードロック至10、 中間収納至20の構造とそれらの内部にかける基 体の販送は前述の従来の場合と全く向じてもる。 前処理量30をはさんで対称に2個のスペック室 50.51が、それぞれ仕切弁41.41を介して 良けられている。 せしていずれかー方のスペック 重を使用することにより製造と関係の終付処理が てもる。即ち、矢印c , d , α , e , f , g , h . j . k . m K 瓜衣白って着体を収送するととK よりスペッチ盒50を用いた処理が行うにとがで 2、位方亡、亡、人、亡、亡、亡、亡、亡、亡、亡、 ㎡に似衣むって番件を扱送することにより、スパ , / 宝 5 0 を用いた処理を行うととができる。 た 少歳処理室30のステージ26,27,29は近体 の異似との間の収送に用い、ステージでもが加品 るるいはエッテング寺の何処理に向いられる。先 化盆べた如く、本鉄斌を用いて裏付処型を行って いる似化、仕切弁(じも閉じたませスペッタ賞 5 『七大気筒故して内部の併存化、由其及びターゲ ,トキの交換などに似する定期保守作業を行い、 その後許び天空に非気して、スペッチ型500兒 動計副時間が終了しスペック出るO'K切換える時 別が来るのを持つ。また予期せぬ事故でスパック 宜50を大気に買放せざるを得ぬよりな単型にた

・ルしょっ、」(化スパッタ室50 化切扱えて生 量を必時間中断するととなく姿質の修復ができる。

以上は本発明の具体的実施例をスペック級世によって説明したものであるが、本発明はスペック 鉄度に扱う丁英型を用いる多くの神経処理気候に 応用できる。様にドライエッテング級型。ブラズ でCVD級値、英型無常級値等はスペック級値と 内線で解析処理を中の実空の気が処型の性能に大 きな影響を与える。そのため処理室の定期的保守 点検の依然でもび返転するまでには低めて長時 関するものである。本発明の生産性向上への実験 は非常に大きく、工業上省みの発明ということが できる。

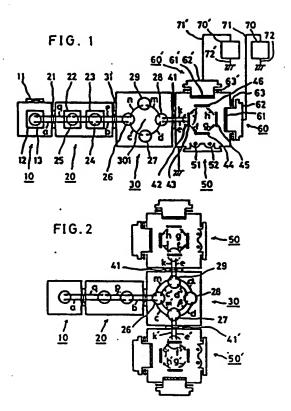
4.図面の簡単な説明

前1回は、従来のスパック接触の構成を示す図。 第2回は、本発明のスパック接収にかける実施例 の構成を示す。

10…ロードロック版 . 20…中間収納金 30…前地県第 . 50…スパッチ版 60 … スパッチ 塩低 . 70 … スパッチ 塩版 13.24,25,26,27,28,29,42,43, 44,45,46 は新休 七示す。

仲許出版人 日電アネルペ株式会社

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Name of Applicant: ANELVA CORPORATION

SPECIFICATION

1. Title of the Invention:

Vacuum Thin Film Processing Apparatus

2. Claim:

A vacuum thin film processing apparatus, comprising:

a load and lock chamber for storing substrates which can be vacuumed;

processing chambers for implementing a filming process on said substrates in a vacuum; and

a pre-processing chamber disposed between said load and lock chamber and said processing chamber, having a mechanism for automatically transporting said substrates and capable of implementing a pre-processing of said filming process: and

characterized in that said processing apparatus has a plurality of said processing chambers and is constructed so that a transportation path of said substrates between said

load and lock chamber and said plurality of processing chambers can be selected so that the filming process may be implemented on said substrate in at least one processing chamber selected from said plurality of processing chambers.

3. Detailed Description of the Invention:

The present invention relates to a structure of a sputtering apparatus for automatically forming thin films sequentially on a large number of plate substrates having the same shape by sputtering, and more particularly to a structure of a sputtering apparatus which allows to shorten a downtime of the apparatus caused by the maintenance of the apparatus and to increase a rate of net production time in the whole apparatus operating time.

One exemplary field in which the present invention may be applied is a thin film fabricating process in a process for manufacturing integrated circuits. In that process, it is required, for example, to form a metallic thin film and an insulating thin film having a thickness of about 1 μ on a disc-shaped thin silicon wafer having a diameter of about 125 mm and a thickness of about 0.5 mm. Because the lower the partial pressure of impurity gas within a vacuum container, the better the electrical, mechanical and physical characteristics necessary for the thin films to be fabricated may be obtained in general, it is desirable to shorten a time

exposed to the air as much as possible in the processing chamber for fabricating thin films by sputtering. Also for the same purpose, it is necessary not to bring a material body which may cause impurity gas into the processing chamber. Therefore, it is desired to limit a material body which is brought into the processing chamber to what is just necessary for transporting wafers and ideally, an apparatus having a structure by which only wafers on which thin films are fabricated are brought into the processing chamber is desirable. Further, it is desirable to automatically transport wafers without being directly touched by operators as much as possible when they are handled in order to fabricate uniform thin films efficiently on a large volume of wafers. Further, it is necessary to coat the surface of the wafer only by the thin film having a predetermined thickness and it is not desirable to have fine dust mixed therein or to create pinholes or the like where no film is coated. Due to that, it is preferable to hold wafers vertically within the processing chamber so that no dust deposit on the surface of the wafers, even if dust is produced, during the fabrication of the film.

A vacuum system of the sputtering apparatus used for the purpose described above comprises, basically, a processing chamber for fabricating thin films on substrates and a load and lock chamber for inserting substrates before processing

from the air and for conveying the processed substrates to the air. Normally, the processing chamber is kept in a vacuum state in order to keep a partial pressure of impurity gas as low as possible and only the load and lock chamber is exposed to the air and is vacuumed every time when the substrates are brought in and out. A gate valve between the load and lock chamber and the processing chamber is opened only when the load and lock chamber is vacuumed to transport the substrates between each of the containers.

By the way, in considering a production process for processing an extremely large volume of wafers for a long period of time, it is impossible, from the common sense, to operate the sputtering apparatus for the filming process continuously for a long period of time. That is, the apparatus is always stopped by some reasons, causing a need to destroy the vacuum of the processing chamber. Though it is undesirable for the producer, a case when the function of the apparatus cannot be performed by some failure is one reason of the unavoidable stoppage of the apparatus. Although the probability of causing a failure could have be n reduced to the degree which causes practically no problem by making various efforts to improve the reliability of the apparatus, it cannot be completely eliminated from the aspects of economy and others.

Rather, an apparatus having an adequate price is

operated with an adequate cost in general and the vacuum of the processing chamber is destroyed periodically to positively perform maintenance works. The maintenance works include a replacement of a wear old target material with new one, recovery of evacuation ability by refreshing a cryopump, removal of sputtered film adhered within the container, readjustment of a wafer transport mechanism, and the like. While the vacuum processing chamber is closed and is vacuumed again after the maintenance works, the partial pressure of the impurity gas in the processing chamber has to be lowered in order to obtain thin films having a certain quality as described before, so that preliminary operations such as full vacuuming, baking, pre-sputtering and the like have to be carried out taking a long time before entering th production. The rate of the net production time for fabricating thin films on the wafers and the operating time of the apparatus other than that, i.e. the total time of time during which the apparatus is stopped by the failure, time for restoring the apparatus, time of scheduled maintenance works planned in advance and time thereafter necessary for the preliminary operation before starting the production is influenced by various factors such as the structure of the apparatus and reliability of the parts used, propriety of operations and works and skill of the operators operating and maintaining the apparatus, degree of difficulty of obtaining characteristics required for films to be fabricated and the like. However, the rate of the time for the maintenance and for the ensuing preliminary operations for re-starting the production in the whole time is considerably large in any sputtering apparatuses. For example, in the typical sputtering apparatus presently used, while the vacuum of the processing chamber is destroyed and the maintenance including the replacement of the target is carried out every time when 2,000 wafers are processed taking about 33 hours, it takes more than four hours, including the maintenance, before starting the next production. Another sputtering apparatus requires about 10 hours of maintenance and preliminary operations before the next production every time when 5,600 wafers are processed taking about 100 hours.

Accordingly, it is an object of the present invention to provide a sputtering apparatus which solves the aforementioned problems, i.e. to provide a novel apparatus which can increase the rate of the net time for fabricating thin films in the whole operation time of the sputtering apparatus.

The summary of the apparatus will be described. According to the present invention, a plurality of thin film processing chambers having the same function is provided within one vacuum thin film processing apparatus. During when the apparatus is normally operated, thin films are

processed in a first processing chamber among them and other processing chambers are not used for the processing. in a stage when thin film processing works of predetermined planned time is finished and the processing in the first processing chamber is stopped to break the vacuum thereof to perform the maintenance work described above, the conveying path for sending substrates to be thin film processed is changed to a second processing chamber and processing is carried out in the second processing chamber. In parallel with the processing in the second processing chamber, the periodic maintenance work is done in the first processing chamber and following that, the preliminary operation for starting another processing is carried out. Because the time consumed for the periodic maintenance work and preliminary operation is generally shorter than the time during which the first and second processing chambers can bear the continuous work, the first processing chamber is ready to start processing again at the point when the time has come to stop processing in the second processing chamber to maintain the chamber. Accordingly, the processing of thin films may be carried out continuously by alternately using the first and second processing chambers having the same function. Further, even when an unexpected failure is caused and the processing chamber has to be repaired, this method allows to repair the failure while continuing the production by sending substrates to be processed to another processing chamber not used till then.

While the case when two processing chambers of the first and second chambers are alternately used has been described in the above explanation, there is practically no trouble in the continuous production by providing two processing chambers having the same function in general. However, the risk of interruption of the production may be lowered to th minimum in cases when the time consumed for the periodic maintenance and preliminary operation is relatively long or when a frequency of causing unexpected failures is high, by providing more than three processing chambers having the same function. However, it increases a volume of the occupied space as a whole apparatus and its price. In considering those points together, an apparatus provided with two processing chambers having the same function and which allows the continuous production is practically preferable. However, the present invention will not particularly limit the number of processing chambers having the same function.

The present invention will be concretely explained hereinbelow with reference to the drawings.

Fig. 1 is a diagram illustrating one example of a prior art sputtering apparatus. In the figure, the apparatus comprises a load and lock chamber 10, an intermediate storage chamber 20, a pre-processing chamber 30 and a sputtering

chamber 50, and gage valves 21, 31 and 41 are provided between each chamber. Each chamber is vacuumed independently by a pump not shown and is kept in the vacuum state. A new substrate is stored in a cassette 12 and is inserted to th load and lock chamber 10 from an inlet 11 of the load and lock chamber 10 and is taken out from there after finishing the filming process by sputtering. Provided within th intermediate storage chamber 20 are two cassettes 22 and 23. The intermediate storage chamber 20 performs roles of preventing the quality of the vacuum in the pre-processing chamber 30 and the sputtering chamber 50 from dropping due to the opening/closing of the load and lock chamber 10 and of conveying non-processed substrates and processed substrates without sacrificing the capacity of the whole apparatus per unit time, and the detailed explanation concerning to the structure and role thereof are given in Japanese Patent Application Nos. 55-169057 and 55-137802. The pre-processing chamber 30 plays a role of implementing preliminary processes such as heating of the substrates and sputter-etching on the pre-stage of the fabrication of the films by sputtering. The substrate is placed on either of four stages 26, 27, 28 and 29. Among them, the stage 27 is used for heating or sputter-etching and the stage 29 is used for cooling, or the like. While the substrates are conveyed through and in the load and lock chamber 10, the intermediate storage chamber 20 and the pre-processing chamber 30 by a linear movement using a belt and a rotary movement centering on an adequate axis, the explanation thereof is given in detail in Japanese Patent Application Nos. 55-151815 and 56-35743.

Within the sputtering chamber 50, a substrate 42 (shown by dashed line) in a horizontal state is rotated by 90° to be held in an almost vertical state as shown by the reference numeral 43 and then is rotated as it is by step of about 90° around a vertical axis 301 which is located almost at the center of the pre-processing chamber 30. A substrate 44 is heated by heating lumps 51 and 52 in a second state in the pre-processing chamber 30 and a filming process is implemented on a substrate 45 in a third stage. Similarly, another filming process is implemented on a substrate 46 in a fourth stage. Sputtering electrodes 60 and 60' are provided at the positions facing to the substrates in the third and fourth stage. The sputtering electrode comprises a target 61 and a cathode body 62 and is mounted on the wall of a vacuum container through an intermediary of an insulator 63. A minus high voltage is applied to the cathode body 62 by a sputtering power supply 70 via feed lines 71 and 72 (to earth potential). However, the wall of the metallic vacuum container is grounded by an earth source 81 and is kept in the earth potential. When a gas such as argon is supplied to the sputtering chamber 50 via a gas introducing system not shown, a low voltage gas discharge is caused near the cathode and positive ions hit the target 61 and others, forming thin films by sputtering. In the whole apparatus, the substrate 13 stored in the cassette 12 is stored once in the first cassette in the intermediate storage chamber through a path shown by an arrow a and then is advanced sequentially along arrows b, c, d, e, f, g, h, j, k, m, n and p and is returned to the second cassette 22 in the intermediate storage chamber 20 after the filming process. Then, it is returned again t the original cassette position within the load and lock chamber 10 along an arrow q. This is how the prior art apparatus is operated.

Fig. 2 is a diagram illustrating a preferred embodiment of a sputtering apparatus of the present invention. In the present embodiment, the structure and the conveyance of substrates within the load and lock chamber 10 and the intermediate storage chamber 20 are the totally same with the prior art example described above. However, two sputtering chambers 50 and 51' are provided symmetrically interposing the pre-processing chamber 30 therebetween through the intermediary of gate valves 41 and 41', respectively. Then, the same filming process with that described above may be performed by employing either one sputtering chamber. That is, a process employing the sputtering chamber 50 may be performed by conveying substrates sequentially along arrows

c, d, a, e, f, g, h, j, k and m and another process employing the sputtering chamber 50' may be performed by conveying substrates sequentially along arrows c', d', \u03b3, e', f' g', h', j', k' and m'. It should be noted that the stages 26, 27 and 29 in the pre-processing chamber 30 are used to convey the substrates between the neighboring chambers and the stage 28 is used for pre-processing such as heating and etching. As described before, while the filming process is performed using this apparatus, periodic maintenance works such as cleaning of the inside and replacement of jigs and targets is carried out by opening the sputtering chamber 50' to the air while closing the gate valve 41' and after that, the chamber is vacuumed again to be ready for the time when the planned operation time of the sputtering chamber 50 ends and the chamber is switched to the sputtering chamber 50'. Further, even when a situation occurs which compels to open the sputtering chamber 50 to the air due to an unexpected failure, the apparatus may be repaired without interrupting the production for a long time by switching to the sputtering chamber 50'.

While the concrete embodiment of the present invention has been explained above, the present embodiment may be applied not only to the sputtering apparatus but also to many thin film processing apparatuses using vacuum. In particular, a dry etching apparatus, plasma CVD apparatus,

vacuum deposition apparatus and the like are similar to the sputtering apparatus and the quality of vacuum during filming process influences significantly to the performance of th processing. Due to that, although it is taking a quite long time before operating the apparatus after the periodic maintenance and inspection of the processing chamber, the present invention eliminate this idle time to zero. The contribution of the present invention to the improvement of the productivity is very large and it can be said that th present invention is an useful invention industrially.

4. Brief Description of the Drawings:

Fig. 1 is a diagram illustrating a structure of a prior art sputtering apparatus; and

Fig. 2 is a diagram illustrating a structure of a preferred embodiment of a sputtering apparatus of the present invention.

In the drawings, the reference numeral (10) denotes a load and lock chamber, (20) an intermediate storage chamber, (30) a pre-processing chamber, (50) a sputtering chamber, (60) a sputtering electrode, (70) a sputtering power supply, (13, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 42, 43, 44, 45 and 46) substrates.

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